United Nations A/51/PV.42

General Assembly
Fifty-first Session

Official Records

42nd plenary meeting
Monday, 28 October 1996, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Razali Ismail . . . . . (Malaysia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 14

Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Agency (A/51/307)

Draft resolution (A/51/L.9)

Amendments (A/51/L.10, A/51/L.11 and A/51/L.12)

The President: Before calling on the first speaker, I should like to propose, if there are no objections, that the list of speakers for the debate on this item be closed at 12 noon today.

It was so decided.

The President: I now invite the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Mr. Hans Blix, to present the report of the Agency for the year 1995.

Mr. Blix (International Atomic Energy Agency): It is an honour for me, on the occasion of the submission of the annual report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for 1995, to address the General Assembly and give an up-to-date account of the activities and concerns that engage the IAEA.

One hundred years ago, the French professor Henri Becquerel discovered radioactivity. Some 50 years later, at the end of the Second World War, two nuclear bombs were launched over Japan, demonstrating the destructive power of nuclear energy. Ten years later the peaceful potential of nuclear energy came to the fore at the first International Conference on the Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy at Geneva. Much of the secrecy that had surrounded nuclear science during and after the war was lifted, which led to widespread optimism about the potential benefits of the various uses of nuclear energy.

Since then a nervous world has watched the belligerent atom during some 2,000 nuclear-weapons tests and a nuclear armaments race. In the same period there has been rapid development and deployment of the beneficial uses of nuclear energy to generate electricity, to combat cancer and help diagnostics, to improve food production, and to measure and reduce pollution — to mention but a few uses.

Throughout this period the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has served member States by helping to compile nuclear-relevant data, to disseminate knowledge and know-how about peaceful uses of nuclear energy, to draft common radiation protection and other safety standards, and to verify that nuclear material under international safeguards is used only for peaceful purposes. Over time the work of the Agency has both expanded and changed considerably. Governmental involvement in the promotion of nuclear science has given way somewhat to emphasis on regulatory work in

96-86633 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

the fields of the safe use of nuclear installations and the safe disposal of nuclear waste. A similar change of emphasis has occurred also in the IAEA. While some of the provisions of the IAEA Statute concerning ownership and operation of nuclear installations — for instance, for the storage of plutonium — may have been overambitious and remain unused so far, the rule of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) obliging parties to submit all their present and future nuclear activities to IAEA safeguards has resulted in a sizeable verification activity of growing importance. Development cooperation, based both on the IAEA Statute and called for under the NPT, has similarly become a large activity. However, financing from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which was once a large source of funding for IAEA technical cooperation, has now become a minor source. Moreover, the orientation of programmes has shifted somewhat from basic nuclear science and technology to projects with more direct impact on sustainable development: increased food production, identification of water resources, eradication of insect pests, development of new plant mutants, and so forth.

As the world changes and the problems facing Governments change, intergovernmental organizations, which are their joint tools, must also change. Moreover, unforeseen events influence the agendas of Governments, and this is reflected also in the agenda of the IAEA. It suffices to mention the names Three Mile Island and Chernobyl, Iraq and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), Semipalatinsk and Mururoa, to evoke the growing engagement of the IAEA in the fields of nuclear safety, safeguards verification and assessment of the radiological situation at nuclear-weapons test sites.

Change is occurring also in the methods and techniques used by the IAEA to fulfil its functions. Information compiled by the Agency from member States — for instance, on the operation of nuclear installations — is now processed electronically and often made available on line not only to member Governments but to all interested parties. To take an example, INIS, or the International Nuclear Information System, is a truly international bibliography of material published in the nuclear field. It is available on line. I might further mention that, although meetings of the Agency's Board of Governors are closed and the records restricted, under a recent decision practically all Board documentation older than two years is declassified and will soon be available to all on line. In addition, a home page on the Internet now offers a wealth of information about the Agency and its current work. In the safeguards field, the control of nuclear material is being made more effective and efficient by the use of remote monitoring and automatic transmission of data. Another innovation is a direct line between the Secretary-General of the United Nations and myself to ensure rapid communication in case of crisis. The Agency has also indicated its readiness to have a televised link to the Security Council to enable the Council to be briefed at any time without delay. So far the need has not been felt for this, but a practice of informal briefings for the Council is developing, thus ensuring close liaison between the nuclear inspection arm of the United Nations system and the enforcement organ.

It is possible that continuous change and adaptation have been made easier within the IAEA by the practice of the Agency of rotating most professional staff. Long-term staff are most valuable for stability, experience and institutional memory, but for flexibility in programming, for innovation and for awareness of current problems in the field and their possible solutions, a steady inflow and outflow of professional staff has proved helpful in the case of the IAEA.

There is no lack of challenges in the nuclear sphere and member Governments would want the organization to respond to many of these. The problem is that the zero-real-growth policy, combined with the difficulty of abandoning existing essential programmes and of making sufficient resources available through economies, limits what can be tackled. Many new tasks — for instance, measures countering illicit trafficking in nuclear materials or ad hoc projects concerning nuclear safety and waste — are, in fact, handled in large measure on the basis of extrabudgetary voluntary contributions. This is not satisfactory, but is far better than inaction.

Let me now turn to some of the challenges currently facing the IAEA. With the nuclear arms race over, a number of nuclear arms control or disarmament treaties have been concluded or are in the making. I shall soon address the verification tasks which this may place on the IAEA, but at this point I would like to pose the important question of whether putting the evil genie of the belligerent atom back into the bottle will contribute to a more general acceptance of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, in particular the exploitation of the potential for the generation of electricity and heat. It is too early to know the answer, but it is not too early to recognize its importance.

Among the vital issues facing the world is the risk of global warming caused by excessive emissions of some

gases, linked in large measure to energy use: notably carbon dioxide and methane. The Framework Convention on Climate Change, signed at the Rio Conference in 1992, did not specify how the risk is to be met. While the United Nations system has at its disposal a group of prominent scientific experts in climatology — the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) — which examines the problems, probability and causes of climate change, the system does not have any single organization providing impartial expert data and analysis of different sources of energy. As a result, some of the energy scenarios designed by the IPCC in response to the risk of global warming are questioned by outside experts.

At the IAEA the goal of sustainable development is fully accepted, and it has been considered important that all energy sources be impartially and scientifically analysed for their impact upon life, health and the environment, including climate. For this reason cooperation has been sought with several other international organizations in a joint project, known as DECADES, dealing with electricity generation. The project develops methods and software through which individual countries are able to assess and compare the health and environmental impact, as well as the cost, of different ways of generating electricity, taking into account the full cycle — that is to say, from the extraction of fuel to the disposal of waste. Not surprisingly, these analyses show that the fossil fuels — coal, oil and gas, in this order — are at the top of the scale of energy sources contributing greenhouse gases — particularly carbon dioxide — while nuclear power and renewable sources of energy contribute the least greenhouse gases. These findings are entirely consistent with the experience reported by Mr. Priddle, the Head of the International Energy Agency (IEA) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), at the second session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Geneva last summer. Mr. Priddle observed that:

> "Nuclear power accounted for the greater part of the lowering of the carbon intensity of the energy economies of the OECD countries".

There should now be a general awareness among Governments that an expanded use of nuclear power and of renewable sources of energy, together with conservation measures, could significantly help to restrain greenhouse gas emissions. Regrettably, this has not yet led to common conclusions at the global level. A few Governments — in Japan, the Republic of Korea, China and in Eastern Europe — expressly refer to environmental concerns in explaining their expanded use of nuclear power. However, at present most countries are continuing to expand their use of fossil fuels and are failing to meet the targets which they have set for themselves to restrain their emissions of greenhouse gases. There is a regrettable gap between the rhetoric of restraint and the reality of growing greenhouse gas emissions.

The reason why nuclear power expansion is not very actively discussed by most Governments — despite its significant potential as a response to the risk of global warming — lies in the controversy that surrounds this source of energy in many industrial countries. Although nuclear arms control and disarmament will eliminate one past common concern, others remain, notably regarding safety in nuclear power operation, safety in nuclear waste disposal and illicit trafficking in nuclear materials. The IAEA is actively engaged in all these subjects.

With regard to nuclear safety, the accident at Chernobyl in 1986 had very serious consequences for human health and the environment and a major negative impact on the further expansion of nuclear power. This makes it all the more important that all the lessons be drawn that can be drawn from this tragic event. On the tenth anniversary of the accident, the IAEA, the World Health Organization and the European Commission co-sponsored an international conference last April to sum up the results of the various assessments made and specialized meetings held on the consequences of the accident. It attracted the participation of over 800 experts from 71 countries and concluded with a remarkable degree of consensus. Among the conclusions was a confirmation of a significant increase in the incidence of thyroid cancer among children born before and within some months after the accident. No increase in any other form of cancer has been identified. The social and psychological consequences of the accident, combined with the consequences of the political and economic changes, have been severe. At the technical level renewed attention must be paid to the "sarcophagus" around this destroyed reactor. The question of the closure of the whole Chernobyl plant needs also to be conclusively settled.

A Summit of eight States on Nuclear Safety and Security was held in Moscow on 19-20 April 1996. It resulted *inter alia* in recognition of the importance of nuclear power as an energy source that is consistent with the goal of sustainable development and in commitments to an international nuclear safety culture, as well as to strengthening the IAEA safeguards system. Needless to

say, this attention at the highest levels to nuclear matters is of great importance as guidance both to those working in the nuclear sphere and to the general public.

Last week on United Nations Day, 24 October, the IAEA Convention on Nuclear Safety entered into force. While recognizing that national authorities have the responsibility for supervising the safety of nuclear power plants, this Convention lays down a number of basic principles which must be respected. It also provides a procedure under which the parties are obliged to submit reports on the safety of nuclear power plants on their territory and to accept review of these reports by other States.

In the coming year three new legal instruments relevant to safety are expected to be finalized. A new convention will contain basic rules concerning the safe management, including disposal, of radioactive waste. Like the Convention on Nuclear Safety, it will oblige parties to submit periodic reports on implementation and to accept review of them by States parties. Other instruments will bring about a revision of the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and an arrangement for supplementary funding.

The development of conventions and other legal instruments and standards, together with a variety of international services and assistance programmes, and heightened national attention to nuclear safety, help to establish the international nuclear safety culture to which the participants in the Moscow Summit committed themselves. Results of the efforts to strengthen nuclear safety can be seen in the reduced number of unplanned stoppages in nuclear power plants around the world.

Before I move on to discuss the IAEA's various tasks relating to the belligerent atom, I must touch briefly on the Agency's work in disseminating nuclear techniques to developing countries. I referred in my introduction to the changes that have occurred in the IAEA's programme of development cooperation, and in particular the shift in emphasis from basic research to projects that promote sustainable development and benefit the end user — for instance, the cancer patient or the farmer. I am pleased to report also that by raising the level of ambition and through better management, it has been possible to reach record high levels of programme delivery. Let me give but two examples of projects, both in Africa.

Water resources management is essential for sustainable development, and isotope hydrology techniques have unique capabilities to trace and map water resources so that best use can be made of them. Within a major regional project in Africa, the IAEA is helping to apply these techniques. For instance, the Moyale region in south Ethiopia, covering 45,000 square kilometres, which has three million inhabitants and one of the largest cattle herds on the continent, depends entirely on scarce groundwater resources. Isotopic data have now made it possible to distinguish between renewable and non-renewable water resources, leading to better estimates of the total sustainable capacity for meeting water requirements in this region.

The other example I want to mention relates to the use of radiation in the eradication of some insect pests that affect food production and health. The sterilization of certain insects, such as the Mediterranean fruit fly and the tsetse fly, and the release of large quantities of sterile males make it possible, after unsuccessful campaigns with conventional means, actually to eradicate an insect pest. Thus, through a major effort by the IAEA and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) a few years ago, the New World screwworm was eradicated in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. Right now the focus is on a very promising project to eradicate the tsetse fly from Zanzibar in the United Republic of Tanzania, thereby permitting better cattle-rearing on the island. The aim is complete eradication before the end of 1997. The expected successful outcome is likely to stimulate similar projects in some larger sites in Africa.

I turn now to the growing role of the IAEA to help prevent a further spread of nuclear weapons and to verify nuclear arms control and disarmament agreements. The most important event in this field during the past year was undoubtedly the recent adoption by the General Assembly of the convention prohibiting all nuclear weapons tests. Although there was considerable discussion during the negotiations in Geneva about the possible financial and other advantages of using the IAEA to run the verification activities under the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and to provide the secretariat, the solution eventually adopted was a small separate organization to be located in Vienna. At this juncture it is difficult to know whether simple co-location, welcome as it is, will offer much by way of synergy. While there is some uncertainty about the formal entry into force of the CTBT, it is worth noting that all non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) are already obliged under the NPT not only to refrain from nuclear weapons tests, but also from preparing for such

tests, and the IAEA has the duty to verify in those States that these obligations are respected.

The dominant verification task of the IAEA consists in the operation of comprehensive safeguards under the NPT and nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties. The 180 non-nuclear-weapon States now party to the NPT have committed themselves to conclude comprehensive safeguards agreements with the IAEA. I regret to report that, despite periodic reminders, over 50 of these States have yet to do so.

Treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones are increasing in number and play an important role in consolidating commitments to non-proliferation on a regional basis and in providing specific supplementary arrangements and undertakings responding to needs of the particular region. All of them rely on the IAEA for verification. The Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco) will hopefully enter into force for its entire zone of application during the next year. The Pelindaba Text of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty signed in Cairo last April, which establishes a nuclear-weapon-free zone for Africa, goes further than the NPT. For example, it prohibits any armed attacks against nuclear installations. Similarly, the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, signed in Bangkok last December, goes beyond non-proliferation and deals also with issues of nuclear trade, nuclear safety and radioactive waste.

A nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East has been on the agenda of the United Nations and of the IAEA for a number of years. The General Conference of the IAEA has requested me to consult with countries in the region concerning the verification issues linked to such a zone. From my many discussions in the region, I conclude that existing comprehensive safeguards alone will not suffice as means of verification. Most likely, some combination of international and regional or bilateral arrangements will have to be worked out. I have been requested to convene a second workshop on these verification issues in 1997, and I shall do so.

The Agency's verification of Iraq's compliance with its obligations under the relevant Security Council resolutions has, since August 1994, involved more than 600 inspections, the majority of which were conducted without prior notice. These inspections, plus the analysis of the vast amount of documentation handed over to the IAEA and to United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) after the departure of the late Lieutenant-General Hussein Kamel Hassan Al-Majid and the follow-up of procurement transactions, are part of the assessment of Iraq's reissued full, final and complete declaration of its former nuclear weapons programme. The carrying out of joint IAEA-UNSCOM multidisciplinary inspections at weapons-capable sites contributes to the effectiveness of the ongoing monitoring and verification programme for the detection of any attempts by Iraq to conduct activities proscribed by the Security Council resolutions.

In the case of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), the information and access provided to us have been and remain insufficient for a comprehensive picture of the nuclear programme, and questions remain about the completeness of the initial declaration of nuclear activities. Although present verification arrangements give confidence that nuclear installations subjected to a freeze under the agreed framework between the United States and the DPRK are actually frozen, confidence about the DPRK's compliance with its non-proliferation commitments under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) can only come about through more information and full implementation of the safeguards agreement.

A considerable strengthening of NPT-type safeguards became acceptable and was, indeed, demanded by most Governments after the discovery of clandestine nuclear weapons activities in Iraq. In particular, greater assurance was sought regarding non-declared nuclear material and activities related to such material. It was clear that such assurances could only be obtained by giving the IAEA access to more information, by allowing inspectors greater access to relevant sites and by introducing new techniques, such as analysis of environmental samples.

Many of the measures contemplated have been introduced under the authority given to the Agency under existing comprehensive safeguards agreements. For the introduction of measures which may go beyond the authority given in these agreements, an additional draft protocol has been worked out by the secretariat and is now the subject of discussion in a committee under the Board of Governors. Most of the measures now being discussed have been tried out in several industrialized States without great problems for the Agency or for the State concerned. Although these measures will, in the long run, bring efficiency gains and be cost-neutral, it is inevitable that they will also add some burden and inconvenience to the inspected party. Regrettably, as we all know from our experience of controls at airports,

security against possible violations by a few requires some inconveniencing of many.

One of the objections currently raised to the proposed strengthened safeguards system is that it unfairly exempts nuclear-weapon States from measures which are seen as burdensome by some of the non-nuclear-weapon States required to accept them. As disarmament progresses, such inequality of burden should diminish. Verification in States that still have nuclear weapons obviously cannot aim at establishing the absence of nuclear weapons, which is the purpose of the strengthened safeguards system. However, verification in nuclear-weapon States could aim at providing assurance that fissionable material from dismantled weapons does not go into new weapons and that a cut-off agreement prohibiting the production of plutonium or highly enriched uranium for weapons use is respected.

A cut-off agreement remains to be negotiated. Meanwhile the United States and Russia are, in fact, dismantling nuclear weapons, and the Moscow Nuclear Safety and Security Summit last April endorsed the idea of IAEA verification that material from dismantled weapons and other military stocks remains in peaceful storage or use. The IAEA is, in fact, already safeguarding some such material in the United States, and Russia appears willing to accept similar inspections in due course. At a recent trilateral meeting of the Russian Minister of Atomic Energy, the United States Secretary of Energy and myself on the occasion of the IAEA General Conference, it was agreed jointly to explore technical, safeguards-related and financial issues which are connected with such verification. It is my hope that we are here witnessing the first steps towards verification of nuclear disarmament.

One final word of caution is needed after this optimistic note: even with a keen eye to efficiency, the management of multilateral nuclear cooperation, including verification of arms control and disarmament, requires resources: well-qualified personnel, state-of-the-art equipment, and so on. Without adequate funding such personnel cannot be recruited or retained, and the purchase of advanced, cost-effective equipment will be curtailed.

In concluding let me express appreciation to the Government of Austria for its continued support of United Nations system organizations in Vienna.

The President: I now call on the representative of Canada to introduce draft resolution A/51/L.9.

Mr. Fowler (Canada) (*interpretation from French*): On behalf of the sponsors, Canada is pleased to introduce draft resolution A/51/L.9 on the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). This draft resolution reflects the significant developments that have taken place in the work of the Agency since 1995 under the steady and capable direction of its Director General, Mr. Hans Blix.

The Director General has provided visionary leadership over the last 16 years. He is to be commended for his unwavering promotion of the safe and regulated transfer of nuclear technology, and his defence of the nuclear non-proliferation objectives of IAEA safeguards. This delicate balancing act was always achieved with the utmost degree of professionalism and diplomacy. We welcome his comments this morning and thank him for yet another comprehensive report.

The Agency's dedication to maintaining a balance between technical cooperation, safeguards and nuclear safety — the three pillars of the Agency — is noteworthy, and the draft resolution makes every attempt to mirror this equilibrium.

(spoke in English)

Please permit me to draw attention to some of the more significant elements of this year's draft resolution. The richness of the discussions within the Agency and among its members on the technical cooperation activities of the Agency is reflected in this resolution. In particular, we have included in this year's text the thought expressed in IAEA General Conference resolution GC(40)/RES/13, regarding the strengthening of Agency's technical cooperation activities related to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Examples of such contributions made by the IAEA include important work on food irradiation, medical isotopes and pest control.

In addition, there is a new and, we think, welcome reference to the need for the Agency's technical cooperation activities to contribute to sustainable development in developing countries. The Agency's efforts in the production of potable water are particularly noteworthy in this regard.

The important decision of the Board of Governors to establish a committee to draft a protocol to strengthen the effectiveness and improve the efficiency of the nuclear safeguards system is also reflected in the draft resolution. We are aware that a strong commitment to

nuclear safety practices is paramount if nuclear energy is to continue into the twenty-first century. In this connection, we were pleased to welcome the entry into force of the Convention on Nuclear Safety, on United Nations Day, 24 October 1996. This is the first year in which such a reference has been included in the draft resolution. The significance of this Convention to all States cannot be overstated.

The important work being done on a Convention on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management is also highlighted — for the first time — in this year's draft resolution.

It is important that this draft resolution on the Agency's annual report receive wide support. We all have a common interest in ensuring that the work of the Agency in all areas receives due recognition.

Finally, on behalf of the sponsors of the draft resolution, which now include Japan, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey and Ukraine, Canada is pleased to put this text forward. We believe that this draft resolution accurately represents the activities of the Agency, and we have worked with all members in Vienna and New York to develop a text which could attract consensus. We hope that this draft resolution will, indeed, be adopted with the broadest possible support.

The President: I call on the representative of Egypt to introduce an amendment to draft resolution A/51/L.9, contained in document A/51/L.10.

Mr. Abdelaziz (Egypt): I am pleased to speak today to introduce the amendment proposed by Egypt, contained in document A/51/L.10, to the draft resolution (A/51/L.9) just introduced by Permanent Representative of Canada on agenda item 14, entitled "Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency".

Before I proceed with the introduction of my amendment, I would like first of all to express my delegation's sincere appreciation to Mr. Hans Blix, the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), for his comprehensive introduction of the report of the Agency on its activities for last year. I would also like to pay tribute to the delegation of Canada for preparing, negotiating and presenting, on behalf of the sponsors, the draft resolution on this agenda item, and particularly for its repeated attempts to accommodate our proposal in the main text of the draft — which, for certain obvious reasons, was not possible.

The situation in the Middle East is fraught with increasing anxiety and concern as a result of an ambiguous Israeli nuclear programme and the refusal of Israel to join the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) or to place its nuclear facilities under full-scope IAEA safeguards. This situation was subject to thorough discussion at the last IAEA General Conference, in September 1996. The Conference accepted by consensus a statement by the President of the Conference on 20 September 1996 relating to agenda item 23 of the General Conference on application of Agency safeguards in the Middle East, which requested the Director General to invite experts from the Middle East and other areas to a technical workshop on safeguards, verification technologies and related experiences.

In view of the urgent need for extensive IAEA efforts in the fields mentioned in the statement, particularly in the Middle East, my delegation believes that such a request should be noted as a final preambular paragraph in the draft resolution.

As the statement by the President of the General Conference, to which our amendment refers, was accepted by the General Conference by consensus, my delegation proposes that this amendment also be adopted by the General Assembly by consensus, thereby enabling the preservation of the long-standing tradition of adopting by consensus the draft resolution on this important agenda item.

Israel claims that the statement on the workshop made by the President of the General Conference was linked in one way or another to a statement by the President concerning the composition of the regional groups of the IAEA in the context of article VI of the Statute, which is a totally separate item. For my delegation, this is an obvious, flagrant attempt to link two separate issues. There was not and will not be any such linkage between those two issues, either in the IAEA or in the General Assembly, because of the simple fact that Egypt alone does not have the right to decide on Israel's acceptance by any IAEA regional group. In a nutshell, the position of Israel within any regional group of the IAEA is a matter between Israel and the members of that regional group, and cannot, as has been claimed, be packaged with a sensitive and important issue such as the future of the Middle East as a whole. It can be settled only through consultations with member States, as the statement of the Conference President on that issue made clear.

The President: I call on the representative of Israel to introduce an amendment to draft resolution A/51/L.9, contained in document A/51/L.12.

Mr. Yativ (Israel): I am pleased to introduce Israel's amendment (A/51/L.12) to the draft resolution on the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). During the IAEA General Conference, held last month, two statements were issued by the President of the Conference and adopted by the Conference. The first statement dealt with a workshop on verification to be convened by the IAEA for Middle East experts and other interested parties. The second statement dealt with the composition of regional groups in the IAEA in the context of article VI of the IAEA's Statute.

Both statements were negotiated and finally adopted as a package. Following the tabling of an Egyptian amendment to the draft resolution entitled "Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency", which deals only with the workshop mentioned in one of the statements of the President of the Conference, the Israeli delegation has found it appropriate to table its own amendment. The Israeli amendment deals with the second statement of the President of the Conference concerning the composition of regional groups of the IAEA. It reads as follows:

> "Noting the statement by the President accepted by the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency on 20 September 1996, in the context of the agenda item "Amendment of article VI of the Statute" in which, *inter alia*, the President requests that the Chairman of the Board of Governors consult with member States and report, for the consideration of the General Conference, specific proposals to include each member State within the appropriate area at the time of the Conference in September 1997." *(A/51/L.12)*

Israel did not wish to amend the draft resolution on the IAEA. However, under the circumstances we had to do so in order to keep the balance. Therefore, we call upon all Member States to support Israel's amendment.

Mr. Inderfurth (United States of America): On behalf of the United States, my delegation wishes to express its firm support for the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and its annual report. The IAEA has played a crucial role in assuring that nuclear energy is not used for military purposes and in promoting its peaceful use through technical cooperation and nuclear safety programmes. Indeed, the Agency holds an important position in maintaining international security and assisting in the development of humankind. Because of this, the United States and the global community have a compelling interest in supporting a strong and efficient IAEA. We commend the Director General, Mr. Blix, and the IAEA secretariat for their continued effective and committed service.

The indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has reaffirmed and strengthened the international community's commitment to stopping the spread of nuclear weapons. The foundation of international cooperation under this agreement rests on the IAEA's safeguards system, which builds confidence among States that transfers of nuclear technology and information will not be diverted for military purposes.

In the light of recent experiences, improvements to the IAEA's ability to detect the diversion of nuclear material from declared facilities and to provide credible assurance of the absence of undeclared activities are necessary. The goal of reinforcing the non-proliferation regime under the NPT also depends on reinforcing the IAEA safeguards system. Bearing this in mind, my Government supports early action in the IAEA to strengthen its safeguards mandate.

My Government commends IAEA efforts to monitor the freeze of nuclear activities and to implement safeguards in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). The United States-DPRK Agreed Framework is important to the preservation of stability on the Korean peninsula. None of the progress being made under the agreement would have been possible without the involvement of the IAEA. The United States remains committed to the terms of the Agreed Framework, and continues to urge the DPRK to cooperate fully with the Agency, as set forth in the agreement.

On the subject of Iraq, We believe that Iraq deliberately continues to withhold information from the IAEA regarding its nuclear weapons programme. We note, though, that the language on Iraqi compliance with relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions contained in operative paragraph 7 of the draft resolution presented today does not accurately reflect the current situation. We must be clear — Iraq continues to withhold information concerning its nuclear programme in violation of its commitments under United Nations Security Council resolution 687 (1991) and other Security Council resolutions. The IAEA noted in its most recent

semi-annual report to the Security Council that it believes that Iraq still retains a complete record of its nuclear programme.

The United States commends the continuing efforts of the IAEA to determine the scope of Iraq's clandestine nuclear weapons programme, which was undertaken in clear violation of Iraq's commitments as a party to the NPT. We support the IAEA's comprehensive on-site monitoring and verification system, which is intended to thwart the rebuilding of Iraq's nuclear weapons programme.

I again call upon Iraq to honour fully the commitments it accepted under United Nations Security Council resolution 687 (1991) and other Security Council resolutions, and to provide immediately all information and equipment relating to its weapons of mass destruction programmes to the IAEA and the United Nations Special Commission. There can be no consideration of modifying the sanctions regime on Iraq until it complies fully with all relevant Security Council resolutions.

May I turn to two other subjects, namely nuclear safety and technical cooperation. We commend the IAEA secretariat for expanding significantly its activities in the field of nuclear safety. These activities are now housed in a separate department within the secretariat. In addition, we commend the secretariat for playing an instrumental role in fostering the development of a global nuclear safety culture based on an improved international legal framework, recommended safety standards and advisory services. The Agency should take great satisfaction in its supportive role in the successful conclusion of the Convention on Nuclear Safety which entered into force on 24 October 1996. The Convention underscores that final responsibility for nuclear safety lies with national Governments and establishes the principle that international cooperation is essential for achieving the highest levels of nuclear power safety worldwide. The widest possible adherence to this Convention will enable this achievement to be met.

We support the IAEA secretariat's efforts to enhance its technical cooperation activities through the model project concept. By stressing its role as a partner in development and providing technology based on the socio-economic needs of a State, the IAEA is improving its efficiency and effectiveness in providing tangible benefits in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy for people around the world. We urge the secretariat to continue its reforms within the Department of Technical Cooperation aimed at improving project formulation, management and implementation.

In closing, my Government applauds the IAEA's contribution to international peace, security, and welfare. The United States pledges its continued strong support for the Agency and its excellent work.

Mr. Baumanis (Latvia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Mr. Campbell (Ireland): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The following associated countries align themselves with this statement: Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia. Iceland and Norway have also aligned themselves with this statement.

Allow me to begin by expressing the gratitude of the members of the European Union and those States which have aligned themselves with this statement for the important work carried out by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) during 1995 and the first part of 1996, as described in the annual report for 1995. I should also like to thank the Director General, Mr. Hans Blix, for the additional information which he has just given. We commend the Director General and the secretariat and staff of the Agency for their commitment and professionalism in delivering an expanded programme within resource constraints.

The presentation to the General Assembly of the annual report of the IAEA provides us with a valuable opportunity to review the work which the Agency has carried out and to measure the impact and efficiency of its activities in the various fields in which it operates in accordance with its statutory functions, both in respect of its work in the prevention of nuclear proliferation and in the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, as well as in the strengthening of international cooperation in nuclear safety, radiological protection and waste management. The European Union wishes to offer a number of comments on some of these activities, beginning with the achievements of the international community in the field of non-proliferation.

The European Union welcomes the historic decision taken by the General Assembly in September to adopt the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which we consider to be one of the most significant nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament measures concluded

by the international community to date. For the European Union, this Treaty represents the implementation of commitments entered into in article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and as most recently outlined in the Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament, adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to that Treaty.

The European Union welcomes the fact that already in the first six weeks since the Treaty was opened for signature, 129 Member States have demonstrated the importance they attach to this instrument by signing the Treaty. The European Union calls on all States to ratify the Treaty at the earliest possible date. The establishment of a Preparatory Commission for the CTBT organization later this year in Vienna will open the way for the necessary preparatory work to commence to give effect to the Treaty. We expect that there will the closest possible cooperation and the minimum of duplication between the IAEA and the CTBT Organization in the fields of administrative and logistical support in the interest of both efficiency and cost effectiveness. The conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty is not the end of a process. Further systematic and progressive efforts leading to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are called for. The European Union urges the Conference on Disarmament, also pursuant to the Principles and Objectives agreed to at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, to proceed to negotiations on a non-discriminatory, multilateral, and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, a so-called cut-off convention. We call on the Conference to activate without delay the ad hoc committee for which the mandate had already been agreed early in 1995.

Last year the Union welcomed the indefinite extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the decision on Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament and the decision on strengthening the review process of the Treaty. Further progress has since been achieved on the path to universality of the NPT. We once more appeal to the remaining States, and particularly those among them that operate unsafeguarded nuclear facilities, to accede to the Treaty at the earliest possible date and to conclude full-scope safeguards agreements with the IAEA.

The European Union welcomes the safeguards statement for 1995 and the secretariat's notice that it had not found any indication that nuclear material which has been placed under safeguards was diverted for any military purpose or for purposes unknown, or that safeguarded facilities, equipment or non-nuclear material were misused.

We are, however, concerned at the report of the obstacles which continue to be placed in the Agency's path as it attempts to carry out its assigned task of verifying the correctness and completeness of the initial declaration of nuclear material by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Delays in the implementation of this verification may have a critical effect on the Agency's ability to conclude that there has been no diversion of nuclear material in the DPRK. We urge the DPRK to comply with its safeguards commitments.

In respect of Iraq, we note the conclusion of the safeguards implementation report that, as of 31 December 1995, there was no indication of a need to change the Agency's assessment that Iraq's practical capability to manufacture nuclear weapons had been destroyed, removed or rendered harmless. In the light of Iraq's failure in the past to comply with Security Council resolutions, the European Union urges the secretariat to continue to exercise vigilance in this matter. In this context, while noting the more constructive approach adopted over the past 12 months by Iraq towards the Agency, the European Union expresses concern at Iraq's failure on 7 July 1996 to provide immediate access to the Agency's action team and its previous withholding from the Agency of information about its nuclear weapons programme in violation of its obligations under relevant Security Council resolutions, and, in this context, stresses the need for Iraq to cooperate fully with the Agency to resolve the remaining inconsistency concerning the full, final and complete declaration in achieving the implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions.

While such matters continue to give us cause for concern in the context of non-proliferation goals, other positive developments have occurred in the past year, notably in respect of nuclear-weapon-free zones. The European Union considers such zones based on arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned as important complementary instruments to the NPT.

The European Union therefore welcomes the signature on 11 April 1996 of the Treaty of Pelindaba, establishing an African nuclear-weapon-free zone; and the signing of the relevant Protocols to the Treaty of

Rarotonga, on 25 March 1996, by France, the United Kingdom and the United States. The European Union welcomes the efforts to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South-East Asia. The Union supports this project and urges the countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) to pursue their objective in a way that recognizes general principles of international law. The European Union welcomes the steady consolidation of the regime established by the Treaty of Tlatelolco, the first Treaty to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in a large inhabited region of the world.

In the Middle East, the European Union continues to support efforts for the early establishment by the States in the region of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. We call upon all States directly concerned to overcome existing difficulties and to take the requisite steps for the implementation of a mutually and effectively verifiable nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region.

Accession by regional States, particularly in South Asia and the Middle East, to the NPT, which remains the cornerstone of the international non-proliferation regime, would contribute to confidence that nuclear programmes in these regions were exclusively for peaceful purposes.

The European Union confirms once again its strong support for strengthening the effectiveness and improving the efficiency of the safeguards system and its full commitment to Programme 93+2. The experience of recent years has demonstrated the need for a vigorous approach to verification. The increased risk of detection is itself a major deterrent to potential proliferators.

In our view, the adoption of adequate new measures will significantly increase the IAEA's capability to build as complete a picture as possible of a State's nuclear activities and thereby increase the capability of the Agency to detect undeclared nuclear activities, in accordance with the Decision on "Principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament" adopted by the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference.

We are already working with the Agency on the implementation of part I measures, while in respect of part II we will continue to participate actively in the committee assigned to draft a model protocol at the earliest possible date. We will continue to make every effort to bring the work of the Committee to a successful conclusion at the earliest possible date.

Nuclear export control measures are useful instruments for preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. It must be clearly understood that the right enshrined in article IV of the NPT to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes is to be exercised in conformity with the non-proliferation obligations set out in articles I and II of the Treaty. Thus, far from being an obstacle to the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, nuclear-related export controls are the necessary corollary of peaceful nuclear cooperation.

The European Union, which has endorsed the guidelines in matters of nuclear exports published by the Agency in the INFCIRC/254 series, calls on all exporting countries which have not yet done so to accept these guidelines and to establish an effective national mechanism for export control. The principles and objectives adopted at the NPT Review and Extension Conference in 1995 state that nuclear-related export controls should be promoted within the framework of dialogue and cooperation among all interested States parties. The European Union has been actively following up this issue with others.

In relation to illicit trafficking, the European Union welcomes the programme for preventing and combating illicit trafficking in nuclear material agreed upon by the participants in the Moscow Summit on Nuclear Safety and Security of April 1996. We call on all Governments to implement this programme, and we hope that it will lead to increased cooperation among Governments in all aspects of prevention, detection, exchange of information, investigation and prosecution in cases of illicit trafficking.

Physical protection of nuclear material is one of the key elements in the fight against illicit trafficking. The European Union reiterates its call to all States that have not yet done so to place all their nuclear material under an effective protection system, in accordance with international guidelines. The European Union further calls on all States that have not yet done so to become parties to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material.

We note with satisfaction the work done by the parties concerned on guidelines for the management of civil plutonium, which would constitute an important complement to the Moscow Nuclear Summit Declaration on the safe and effective management of weapons fissile material designated as no longer required for defence purposes, *inter alia*, through the Nuclear Suppliers Group

controls on the traffic in nuclear materials, which would be safely stored, protected and placed under IAEA safeguards.

Technical cooperation is the area of Agency activity of most direct relevance to many members of the IAEA. The scale of the European Union's contribution across the range of Agency cooperation activities reflects the importance which we believe targeted assistance can have in economic and social development in those countries. Fully one third of Technical Cooperation Fund resources in 1995 came from the European Union.

The tenth anniversary of the tragic accident at Chernobyl provided an opportune moment for the IAEA, the European Commission and the World Health Organization to organize a conference to review the consequences of the accident and the lessons that have been learned. Its conclusions, as well as other relevant information, will serve as a factual basis for decisions about future work and collaboration.

The European Union welcomes the decision of the Moscow Summit on Nuclear Safety and Security to provide international assistance to Ukraine. The Union is committed to providing financial aid to assist Ukraine in improving nuclear safety and security. We look forward to Ukraine's fulfilment of its commitment to close the old Chernobyl installations by the year 2000 at the latest. The Moscow Summit highlighted progress to date and it reinforced the importance of international partnership in addressing nuclear safety concerns.

The European Union has taken a leading role in the strengthening of regulatory regimes, including in the establishment of the nuclear safety account, administered by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the G 24 coordinating mechanism, the European Union's Poland-Hungary Aid for the Reconstruction of the Economy (PHARE) and Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States (TACIS) programmes, the European Atomic Energy Community loan facility, coordinated support from the international financial institutions for the energy sector, and bilateral cooperation projects.

While recognizing that primary responsibility for nuclear safety rests with national Governments, the European Union welcomes the initiatives taken by the IAEA to strengthen cooperation and mutual assistance and its continuing work in fostering a global nuclear safety culture, and recognizes its contribution to future work under the Convention on Nuclear Safety, which is a major accomplishment in this field.

We congratulate the IAEA on its preparedness to undertake work on limiting the effects of a nuclear accident, should one occur.

Radioactive waste management issues are increasingly important to the public perception of nuclear safety and have become a matter for closer international cooperation. In this connection, the elaboration of a draft convention is well under way and we look forward to the conclusion of a convention in 1997 that will oblige countries to manage their waste properly so as to avoid unacceptable risks now or in the future to both the public and the environment.

On the prospects for ensuring an effective nuclear liability regime providing adequate and equitable compensation to victims in the event of a nuclear accident, we welcome the progress made in discussions on the revision of the 1960 Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage. In particular, we wish to see further efforts at concluding the provisions on guarantees. We remain concerned that vital safety improvements remain to be undertaken in certain States.

At a time of financial stringency in both national administrations and international organizations, we acknowledge the valuable assistance provided by extrabudgetary contributions from certain Governments. However, prompt payment of assessed contributions by all member States of the Agency would immediately improve the Agency's financial situation and permit a greater degree of stability and forward planning in its activities. We urge all members to forward promptly and in full their assessed contributions to the regular budget.

The European Union wishes to acknowledge the efforts of the Director General and his staff, who have shown dedication and commitment in concentrating on priority activities and by applying rigorous standards throughout the Organization.

In conclusion, the European Union supports the draft resolution contained in document A/51/L.9 which has just been introduced by the representative of Canada and expresses the wish that the General Assembly will adopt it.

Mr. Syargeeu (Belarus)(*interpretation from Russian*): The delegation of the Republic of Belarus has carefully studied the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for the period under review and notes with satisfaction the highly professional level of its preparation. We are grateful to the Director General of the Agency, Mr. Hans Blix, for having presented the report to the General Assembly. In the 40 years that have elapsed since the adoption of the IAEA Statute, the Agency has contributed substantially to the development and implementation of international machinery to strengthen security and to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons.

Belarus, as a State that strictly adheres to the principles of non-proliferation, attaches special significance to that area of the Agency's activities. Now that it is independent, Belarus is taking meaningful steps to achieve non-nuclear status. It has ratified the START Treaty, acceded as a non-nuclear State to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and signed a safeguards agreement with the IAEA. The opening for signature of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is another major landmark. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belarus signed that Treaty on 24 September 1996, the very first day it was open for signature.

Belarus values the efforts of the IAEA to promote the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. With the signature of the Treaty of Pelindaba, the entire southern hemisphere has become a single nuclear-weapon-free zone. In our view, this should lead to similar steps by the countries of the northern hemisphere.

An important contribution to the process of nuclear non-proliferation is being made by Belarus, Kazakstan and Ukraine, on whose territories 3,400 nuclear missiles were deployed until recently. The last strategic nuclear missiles will leave the territory of Belarus before the end of this year, thus freeing the entire area of Central and Eastern Europe of nuclear weapons.

In this connection, the initiative by Belarus to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Europe is important and timely. The implementation of that initiative would assist the process of nuclear disarmament, help to prevent the renewal of nuclear confrontation in Europe, consolidate the existing non-nuclear obligations of States in the region, forestall the possibility of the further geographical spread of weapons of mass destruction, and enhance confidence among States.

The term "zone" is designed to give flexibility to this idea and attract potential participants and interested States to discuss it. We believe that such a nuclear-weapon-free zone could be based on a harmonious combination of the legal and political, multilateral and unilateral obligations of States. Both our nearest neighbours, linking their security to membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which have a special position with regard to the nuclear arms of the alliance, and neutral countries could be participants in this endeavour. Members of NATO, which have a special position with regard to the nuclear arms of the alliance, could also join the zone to one degree or another.

This idea should not be regarded simply as a countermeasure to the plans to extend NATO. It is not designed to block such plans but rather to help find solutions towards the establishment of pan-European security and strengthening of international security in general. It takes into account the interests of all European States and security structures. Belarus intends to move gradually towards that goal, bearing in mind the strategic interests of the countries involved and guided by the desire to avoid damaging security and stability on the European continent.

We support IAEA efforts to enhance the effectiveness of the safeguards system, and we intend to comply strictly with the obligations we have entered into in this area. With the direct participation of the United States, Sweden and Japan, as well as with Agency coordination, Belarus has taken the first steps towards establishing a State system of verification and control of nuclear materials. In this connection, we express our gratitude to the Governments of those countries for their assistance.

Belarus welcomes the steps taken by the IAEA to strengthen the existing safeguards system under its Programme 93+2. We are sure that in the future the IAEA will play a key role in strengthening the non-proliferation regime.

Belarus also notes the significant work done by the Agency in the sphere of international law and standards. We refer in particular to the adoption of the Convention on Nuclear Safety and the work under way on the revised Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and a convention on radioactive waste management. In this regard, we would point out that Belarus has already begun the procedure to accede to the Vienna Convention

on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and the Joint Protocol.

Illicit trafficking in nuclear material can be a serious threat to the security of States. In this connection, the programme of action in this area agreed on at the Moscow Nuclear Safety and Security Summit is particularly timely. We also note the proposals made by the Russian Federation for a convention to combat acts of nuclear terrorism, which is now being discussed in the Sixth Committee.

This year, the world community commemorated with sorrow the tenth anniversary of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. That accident not only had a negative impact on the development of nuclear energy, as mentioned by Mr. Blix, it also affected the health of millions of people. Today, nearly two million people live in the contaminated area of Belarus, including approximately 500,000 children. According to the most modest estimates, the economic and material damage done to Belarus by that accident is equivalent to 32 of the Republic's annual budgets, or US$ 235 billion.

Belarus is profoundly grateful to the European Community, the IAEA, the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and others for their contribution to the convening of international meetings devoted to the tenth anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster and which were held at Geneva, Minsk, Vienna and Kiev.

The participants in the Minsk meeting concluded that the significant increase in thyroid cancer among children and young persons in the affected countries — of whom there are more than 1,000 altogether — was caused by the radioactive effect of the Chernobyl disaster. At the present time, new kinds of oncological illnesses are appearing. The international meetings reaffirmed the large scale of the Chernobyl tragedy and the long-term nature of its consequences as well as the need to increase international cooperation in assisting the populations affected, the importance of continued scientific research in this area, and the need to move on from research to concrete projects.

The delegation of Belarus is certain that the United Nations and the IAEA will utilize the results of those meetings in their practical activities, as was mentioned by the representative of the European Union. Belarus is grateful to the United Nations for the work it has done to find a solution to the Chernobyl problem. We are also seriously concerned at the fact that against the background of discussions now under way on the closing of the Chernobyl installation less attention is now being paid to the problem of eliminating the medical and ecological consequences of the disaster. In this connection, we would draw the attention of delegations to two important initiatives put forward by Belarus at the Vienna conference on Chernobyl, namely, the establishment of a single international centre to deal with Chernobyl-connected problems, which would unite the efforts being made by scientists from various countries who are doing research in this area, and the need to set up a fund to protect our planet, which might receive a percentage of the income of nuclear engineering and energy companies, using the funds to eliminate the consequences of nuclear disasters and carry out important ecological programmes. We hope that the United Nations and the IAEA will show understanding and support for these ideas.

Belarus is convinced that we will soon arrive at and agree on a United Nations strategy on further expansion of international cooperation with regard to Chernobyl in the second post-disaster decade, with the active participation of the IAEA.

One of the most important areas of activity of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is technical cooperation. We note the practical significance of the recommendations of the third seminar on policies for technical cooperation, and in particular the positive role that the IAEA is playing as coordinator in strengthening the infrastructure for ensuring radiation and nuclear safety in the new, independent States. We support the recent initiative taken by the Agency to render additional technical support as part of the programme of regional cooperation for 1997-1998. The Agency should in future continue to show a flexible approach to the organization of technical cooperation to those countries, bearing in mind their national interests.

In this connection, the Government of Belarus is counting on the support of the IAEA, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and interested States in the Polessky State Radiation and Ecological Preserve, which deals with scientific research on the impact of ionization on the environment. Highly qualified specialists at this facility are preparing a number of concrete scientific projects whose realization will need international financial support. In this connection, we would like to request that support be given to these

projects, which are of scientific and practical value for the entire international community.

In conclusion, the delegation of Belarus wishes to express its appreciation for the work done by the Agency in 1995 and supports the priority areas for its future activities. We also hope that there will be close cooperation with the Agency in solving all problems pertaining to the peaceful use of atomic energy.

Mr. Abulhasan (Kuwait) *(interpretation from Arabic):* Kuwait bases its support for the work of the IAEA on the peaceful uses of atomic energy on its belief in the importance of the role and responsibility of the Agency. The Agency will not be able to succeed in its endeavours without the cooperation and support of the international community.

Kuwait and the other countries that aspire to peace, security, and stability will never relinquish their dream of freeing this beautiful planet from all weapons of mass destruction — nuclear, chemical and biological. This hope has emerged as a result of Kuwait's realization of the terrible danger posed by these lethal weapons, which threaten present and future generations and jeopardize the stability to which we all aspire. That dream will not be realized unless we use nuclear energy in a rational way.

Kuwait associates itself with those who call for using nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and economic development, particularly in view of the tremendous technological developments we have witnessed in the use of this energy. We wish to express our satisfaction at the report of the IAEA on the progress made in evaluating the technical and economic feasibility of using nuclear power to desalinate the sea and to generate electricity, while ensuring nuclear safety through a safeguards system.

The peaceful use of nuclear energy will dispel the anxiety and apprehension we feel as a result of the negative consequences of the abuse of this energy, and allay our fears concerning radioactive emissions and their resulting risks to health and to the international environment as a whole.

The Government of Kuwait is following with interest the international efforts to prohibit the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and it expresses its satisfaction at the fact that the Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) resulted in the Treaty's indefinite extension. We also welcome the adoption by the General Assembly last September of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), in the hope that this will be a prelude to complete and comprehensive nuclear disarmament.

Kuwait is pleased to have been one of the first countries to sign the CTBT on 24 September 1996. We hope that circumstances will be conducive to its speedy entry into force.

Kuwait also attaches great importance to the activities of the Agency in guaranteeing the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons or their use for military purposes. We believe that one of the Agency's most important activities is the strict application of the safeguards system, which aims to prevent the diversion of nuclear energy for military use. We support enhancing the system and closing its loopholes, which, regrettably, have revealed that the system is very easy to breach, as indicated in the report of the Agency.

The process of limiting nuclear armaments requires, as I indicated at the beginning of my statement, concerted international efforts in order to seriously and in a practical manner work towards that objective.

The creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South-East Asia and the signing of the Pelindaba Treaty on a nuclear-weapon free zone in Africa are but two examples of the practical application of the principle of limiting nuclear armaments and of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

We hope to see the day when the Middle East region will also be free from nuclear weapons. However, Israel's refusal to accede to the NPT and to subject its nuclear installations to the safeguards of the Agency constitutes a major obstacle to the realization of this objective.

We salute the efforts made by the Director General of the Agency to realize this endeavour. We call upon him to continue his consultations with the Middle East countries to facilitate an early application of the full scope of the safeguards on all nuclear activities, so that the Middle East region can be free from all weapons of mass destruction, including non-nuclear weapons.

We reaffirm our full support for the efforts of the Agency and for those of the teams of inspectors. We call on them to continue their constant verification and monitoring activities in Iraq. We also hope that, with the effective participation of the Agency and the Member

States, the export-import mechanism approved by the Security Council in its resolution 1051 (1996), which prohibits Iraq from acquiring any items for the development of its nuclear capability for non-peaceful purposes, will be implemented.

Kuwait also attaches great importance to the efforts made by the Special Commission in charge of ridding the area of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction and the efforts made by international inspectors to ensure that Iraq does not acquire such weapons. Kuwait would therefore like to express its complete support of the efforts made by the Special Commission, led by Ambassador Ekeus.

When Kuwait speaks fear of the spread of nuclear weapons, we are speaking from ongoing experience. Thus, Kuwait calls on the international community to make a concerted effort to use nuclear energy to create a world that enjoys peace not anxiety, development not wars or destruction. We believe in the relationship of peace and stability with development, and we believe that this energy that we are endowed with should be used for the prosperity of all the peoples of the world.

Mr. Kovanda (Czech Republic): At the outset, I wish to recall that my delegation associates itself with the statement presented earlier by Ireland on behalf of the European Union. I shall therefore now address only those issues which the Czech Republic considers of particular importance.

For the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), 1997 will be a year of profound evaluation of what has been achieved and what might have been done even better in the course of its 40 years of existence. In our view, positive results predominate both in the area of safeguards and in that of promotional activities. Let me review some of the major events which have taken place since the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. The international nuclear-energy community, and ultimately non-nuclear States as well, have been marked by a cornerstone event, the recent entry into force of the Convention on Nuclear Safety. Concluding the Convention and opening it for signature at the thirty-eighth session of the IAEA General Conference in 1994 were two major steps towards reaching the highest possible safety of nuclear power plants all over the world. The Czech Republic calls upon all Member States which have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Convention. Only the widest possible adherence to it will allow us to obtain the objectives of the Convention.

Nuclear safety includes safety of radioactive waste management. Czech experts participate in the work of the open-ended group preparing the text of a draft convention which will deal with this very sensitive issue. Concluding a convention on safety of radioactive waste management is a priority for us, and we believe that the discussions in the group will lead to a compromise text that could be submitted to a diplomatic conference in the near future.

The Czech Republic also views with satisfaction developments in the area of thwarting illicit trafficking in nuclear material and other radiation resources. We welcome the establishment of the IAEA database of incidents in this field. It is a very useful source of information which assists Member States in identifying suppliers and potential recipients and in combating illegal cross-border transfers.

We are pleased that in the process of revising the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage experts have managed to narrow their differences and have made remarkable progress towards finalizing its update. We would like to witness similar progress in negotiations concerning a convention on supplementary funding in the near future.

The Czech Republic has always attached very high importance to the role of the IAEA in safeguarding nuclear facilities worldwide in accordance with its mandate under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). However, we too have realized that the present system of safeguards does not enable the Agency to detect possible clandestine and undeclared nuclear activities. It needs to be modified and strengthened. We confirm once again our commitment to the work of the drafting committee on the protocol supplementary to the safeguards agreements. The Czech Republic will do what it can to contribute to the earliest possible finalization of the text, which should become an instrument for the more effective and efficient implementation of safeguards.

The statute of the IAEA gives it a mandate to promote the use of nuclear energy in all human activities for exclusively peaceful purposes. The Czech Republic fully recognizes the importance for many States of IAEA technical assistance and cooperation programmes and commends the Agency for its efforts. We have never been a recipient country of this type of technical assistance, yet we have always both fulfilled our pledges to the Voluntary Fund for technical cooperation and paid our contributions to the regular budget in full and in

time. This is the right way to deal with the financial difficulties of the IAEA and to enable the Agency to carry out all its tasks. When considering technical cooperation and assistance for Member States for the next period, the IAEA should take into account their financial discipline as well.

Despite all its efforts, the IAEA remains unable to verify the initial declaration of nuclear material made by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea; that country is still not in full compliance with its safeguards agreement. Although some progress has been made, the Czech Republic continues to appeal to the DPRK to provide the Agency with all the information necessary to verify the correctness and completeness of the declaration, to allow access by inspectors to all installations which are to be subject to safeguards and to assist the IAEA in its deliberations.

We also regret the circumstances in Iraq which have made it difficult for IAEA inspectors to continue their monitoring and verification activities outside Baghdad. The Czech Republic fully supports the Agency in its continuous efforts to investigate all aspects of Iraq's past nuclear weapons programme and to analyse the documentation gained, and it calls upon Iraq to cooperate with the Agency in resolving remaining inconsistencies.

In conclusion, I wish to express once again my delegation's appreciation and support for the work of the Agency. My delegation recommends the adoption of the draft resolution concerning the IAEA.

Mr. Abdellah (Tunisia) (*interpretation from French*): I should like to thank the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for the report submitted to the General Assembly on its activities for 1995, as contained in document A/51/307. We also wish to thank the Director General of the Agency, Mr. Hans Blix, for his statement this morning and for the additional information it provided on the work of the Agency during the past year.

The annual review by the General Assembly of the report of the IAEA reflects the ongoing interest of Member States in the role played by the Agency and in its activities, which involve both strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime and providing technical cooperation and assistance to countries, particularly developing ones, in connection with the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

This post-cold-war period has been characterized by the adoption of significant measures in the field of disarmament, including the recent adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which my country supported and signed. The Agency, as an instrument for nuclear non-proliferation, thus has a vital role to play in strengthening these measures, and others that remain to be adopted, in order to rid the world of its arsenals of terror, particularly those of nuclear weapons.

Likewise, we support the programme to strengthen the Agency's efficiency and to improve the effectiveness of its safeguards system — a programme that is commonly known as 93 + 2. However desirable this may be, we believe that the implementation of this programme should take into account certain basic principles, in particular the need for balance between States' new commitments and their fundamental sovereignty. It is also necessary to ensure that this programme does not entail additional costs, which would lead to an excessive increase in the contributions of States. In this connection, we believe that the nuclear-weapon States should assume the bulk of the costs of the implementation of the proposed new measures. Lastly, the application of the 93 + 2 programme should be consistent with the principle of universality.

The goal of achieving universality for the IAEA safeguards system should be the subject of constant and resolute efforts by the entire international community, the IAEA included. In the Middle East, Israel's nuclear capability still remains outside international control, presenting a constant threat to the security of other States and preventing the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region. We would like here to reiterate our appeal to Israel, the only State in the region that has not acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, to adhere to it and to place its nuclear installations under the IAEA comprehensive safeguards system. This would allow the creation of a denuclearized zone in the Middle East and would, in turn, strengthen the confidence of the States of the region in one another. Such confidence is required for the achievement of lasting peace. The zone would be complementary to the African nuclear-weapon-free zone, since peace and security on the African continent and in the Middle East are interdependent and closely connected.

Another, no less important aspect of the work of the Agency concerns technical assistance and cooperation in the peaceful use of nuclear energy for the benefit of the developing countries. Given its importance to the

economic and social development of these countries, the peaceful use of nuclear technology should be encouraged and strengthened. In addition, the relevant technology should be transferred in order to hasten the development of the countries of the South and by the foundation for sustainable development throughout the world. Such development is synonymous with security in the broadest sense of the term. Among the many civilian areas in which nuclear energy can be used are those involving hydrogeology, the desalination of sea water and studies on the use of small and medium-sized reactors, which can be adapted to the needs of developing countries, including Tunisia.

The International Atomic Energy Agency has a crucial role to play in promoting the peaceful use of nuclear energy. We welcome the measures and decisions the Agency has adopted to strengthen its activities in this field. We emphasize the need to ensure adequate financing for the Agency's programmes in the field of technical cooperation, and believe that the Standing Advisory Group on Technical Assistance and Cooperation established within the Agency should seek ways of further strengthening this cooperation.

Before concluding, I should like to emphasize the importance of improving representation by the various regions of the world within the Agency's organs. The regions of Africa, the Middle East and South Asia remain under-represented on the IAEA's Board of Governors. The time has come to enlarge the Board in order to include other States from these regions, so as to enhance the representativeness of the Agency and strengthen its credibility and its universality.

Mr. Baltov (Bulgaria): My delegation shares the views set forward earlier in the statement of the representative of Ireland on behalf of the European Union and associated countries. Let me also commend the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency and the secretariat of the Agency for the work done, as reflected in the annual report for 1995 and in the comprehensive introductory statement of Mr. Hans Blix. We hope that the annual draft resolution that has been submitted affirming confidence in the role of the IAEA will be particularly helpful for the Agency to accomplish the important tasks ahead, in conformity with its statutory functions.

The conclusion of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is undoubtedly an achievement of truly historic proportions. Bulgaria took a constructive role, within the Conference on Disarmament, in the CTBT negotiation process. In conformity with its long-standing policies in favour of nuclear arms control and disarmament, Bulgaria signed the Treaty on the very first day it was opened for signature here in New York. We believe that the CTBT will strengthen nuclear non-proliferation and will contribute to nuclear disarmament. We join the call for all States to become parties to the CTBT so that the Treaty may enter into force at the earliest possible date, thus banning all nuclear test explosions in all environments forever.

We believe that the location in Vienna of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) will facilitate maximum cooperation and minimum duplication in their work.

Another important step on the security ladder is the speedy conclusion of the so-called cut-off convention by the Conference on Disarmament. We urge the Conference on Disarmament to activate its Ad Hoc Committee, mandated last year to negotiate a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. Bulgaria supports an early start of negotiations on this issue.

As reflected in the introductory statement on the activities of the IAEA, 1996 features a number of important international agreements. First of all, the Convention on Nuclear Safety, fostering a global nuclear-safety culture, entered into force on 24 October and, as a State already party to the Convention, Bulgaria looks forward to its early implementation. On another track, the preparation of the convention on safety of radioactive waste management is advancing well. The work on the revision of the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage seems to have reached a stage forecasting its completion in the not-so-distant future. Given the importance of the broadest possible participation in the future revised Vienna Convention, we favour the so-called phasing-in approach with regard to operators' civil liabilities as a major incentive to meet this objective. We also consider that the revision process should not be decoupled from the elaboration of the complementary funding system.

Bulgaria welcomes the important contribution of the IAEA and States Members to nuclear non-proliferation through the implementation of part 1 and through the

speeding up of endeavours to finalize a model protocol for implementation of part 2 measures of Programme "93 + 2". We regard these measures as pertinent to assuring the non-existence of undeclared nuclear activities. They will enhance the capability of the Agency in conformity with the decision on principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament adopted at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference.

National export-control measures in the nuclear field are instrumental for preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons. As a member of the Zangger Committee and the Nuclear Suppliers Group, Bulgaria supports the view that the right enshrined in article IV of the NPT to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes is to be exercised in conformity with the non-proliferation obligations set out in articles I and II of the Treaty.

Proper handling of the problems related to illicit trafficking in nuclear materials and other radioactive sources also remains high on the international community's agenda. Recognizing that the primary responsibility in this field is at the national level, we welcome the growing importance of international cooperation between the States Members and the role of the IAEA in facilitating it. The programme for preventing and combating illicit trafficking in nuclear material adopted by the participants at the Moscow Summit on Nuclear Safety and Security of April 1996 is expected to enhance cooperation among Governments in all relevant fields, thus deterring illicit trafficking. We are also pleased to note that the consolidated database established by the Agency in this area is already operational.

The IAEA's 1995 annual report clearly demonstrates that the Agency continues to play a vital role in promoting international cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and in fostering global peace and security as provided for in its statute and relevant international instruments. We also welcome the encouraging 1995 safeguards statement of the Agency. Bulgaria reiterates its resolve to further fulfil its obligations in this field.

We note with satisfaction that, as regards technical cooperation, the overall increase in programme delivery in 1995 resulted in the high implementation rate of 75.7 per cent. We would like to commend in particular the increase in model projects, fellowships, scientific visits and participation in training courses. These networking activities broaden the principal objective of technical cooperation to enhance social and economic goals.

The IAEA's activities with regard to nuclear power and the fuel cycle, as well as nuclear and radiation safety, are of great importance for the development of nuclear power and for the safe operation of nuclear facilities. As a country operating WWER-type power reactors, we are particularly interested in the work of the Agency in this field. We are grateful for the Agency's practical assistance in improving the safety of our Kozloduy nuclear-power plant units and in strengthening the Bulgarian Nuclear Safety Authority.

The Bulgarian Government and our national Nuclear Safety Authority have demonstrated a responsible approach to nuclear safety by taking all necessary measures for the safe operation of the Kozloduy nuclear power plant. A programme for the reconstruction, safety upgrading and backfitting of Kozloduy nuclear power plant units 1 to 4 has been developed and is now being implemented in cooperation with the IAEA, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), Westinghouse, Siemens, and the Kurchatov Institute.

Nuclear power is playing and will continue to play an important role in satisfying national energy demands. In 1995 46.4 per cent of Bulgaria's total electricity production was of nuclear origin.

The Republic of Bulgaria's Strategy for Energy Development during the period 1995-2010 and beyond, until the year 2020, has also been approved by the Council of Ministers and the relevant parliamentary commissions. This Strategy's goal is to establish an optimal ratio between the different energy resources. The present diversification of energy resources meets this objective. However, there is no alternative to the expansion of nuclear-power electricity-generating sources after the year 2010, according to this Strategy.

Together with the development of nuclear power, Bulgaria continues to pay active attention to the application of nuclear methods and techniques in medicine, agriculture and industry.

I would like to conclude by reiterating my Government's support for the Agency's activities. We are confident that, under the able leadership of its Director General, Mr. Hans Blix, it will meet its new challenges, as he and previous speakers have pointed out. Bulgaria is determined to be a reliable partner of the Agency in these endeavours.

Mr. Powles (New Zealand): My delegation has supported the adoption of a draft resolution under this item for many years, and we are grateful to the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for his report on the activities of the Agency. It provides a good overview of the important issues currently on the Agency's agenda. We see the Agency as playing an extremely important role in many issues, from fostering research into the peaceful uses of nuclear energy to upholding the nuclear non-proliferation regime. In carrying out this diverse range of functions, the IAEA is a model of efficiency and effectiveness. As in previous years, New Zealand therefore fully supports the adoption of the relevant draft resolution, and is pleased to have once again been able to co-sponsor it.

This year has also marked a milestone in New Zealand's relationship with the Agency. At this year's General Conference in September, New Zealand took a seat on the Agency's Board of Governors. It is the first time my country has been represented on the Board. We sought election in recognition of the fact that the Agency's non-proliferation and other activities are of increasing relevance to all countries, including countries such as New Zealand, without major nuclear industries. We are especially grateful to our colleagues in our regional group, the South-East Asia and Pacific group, for their support for our candidature, and we look forward to working closely with other members of the Board on the important issues addressed by the Agency.

For those reasons, the Agency is now more than ever before a focus for New Zealand. It seems to us an important time in the history of the Agency. Even the most cursory examination of the Director General's report would highlight the crucial role the Agency is playing in some of the key issues that the international community is attempting to address. I should like to outline some of the areas to which New Zealand attaches considerable importance.

We believe that the IAEA will have an important role in the implementation of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). We expect that the Agency will work closely with the provisional technical secretariat soon to be established in Vienna. My delegation believes that there will be many opportunities for cooperation between these two organizations in both the administrative and technical areas. Much can be learned from the IAEA's experience over the last 40 years. However, we expect that the benefits of cooperation will flow both ways, and that many synergies will be found.

The Assembly will recall the importance New Zealand attached to the successful conclusion of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. The end of nuclear testing in our region provided one of this year's highlights for my country. However, the long-held concerns of New Zealand and other members of the South Pacific Forum regarding the potential environmental effects of nuclear testing remain. In this context, New Zealand commends the Agency for its support of the international advisory committee's study of the radiological situation at Mururoa and Fangatau atolls. We hope that this study will provide answers about the effects of past nuclear testing.

Another issue of direct concern to my region is the shipment of nuclear material through the South Pacific. New Zealand and the other countries in the region agree that these shipments should be carried out in accordance with the highest international safety standards. We endorse the Agency's intention to keep the regulations under review to ensure that they remain abreast of scientific and technological developments. A successful conclusion to the negotiations on a convention on the safety of radioactive waste management will further reinforce high safety standards. We also believe that negotiations on a convention on liability for nuclear damage should be speedily concluded, and that the convention should include environmental damage within its scope.

The Agency is also closely involved in efforts to resolve tension in two areas of great concern to my country. New Zealand has welcomed the Agency's effective implementation of the Security Council resolutions on Iraq, and calls upon that country to cooperate fully with the Agency's teams. We also support the Agency's efforts to implement the binding safeguards agreement with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and urge that country's authorities to return to full compliance with its provisions. New Zealand's membership in the Korea Energy Development Organization (KEDO) is designed in part to encourage moves in that direction.

These two experiences give ample evidence that the issue of non-proliferation is not an academic one. They also underscore the need for effective safeguards. For these reasons, my delegation would like to single out the Agency's programme to strengthen the safeguards system — among the Agency's wide range of important activities — as being particularly crucial. The experience in Iraq has demonstrated that traditional safeguards are

not sufficient in themselves to provide full confidence in the non-proliferation system. It is now essential that additional measures be adopted to guard against the risk of clandestine nuclear activities.

New Zealand accordingly strongly supports Programme 93 + 2, which has been developed to address this problem. We welcome the measures that the Agency has already been able to adopt under its existing authority, but it is clear that further, complementary measures will also be needed to achieve a credible and effective system. The capability to detect undeclared nuclear activities is fundamental to the credibility of the Agency and to effective safeguards. Indeed, it is a precondition for a non-proliferation regime in which we can all have faith and confidence.

My delegation understands that the IAEA's committee on strengthening the effectiveness and improving the efficiency of the safeguards system has just completed its second meeting. We appreciate the progress that has been made towards drafting a model protocol to enhance existing safeguards agreements. We urge the IAEA and Member States to make every effort to bring this process to an early and successful conclusion.

Truly effective safeguards are an essential complement to the CTBT and will provide a foundation for further nuclear disarmament measures. The additional measures in the model protocol will be directly relevant to the implementation of a cut-off convention. In short, New Zealand — and, we believe, the whole international community — is looking to the Agency for the final completion of this important and urgent task.

To underscore the importance we attach to this issue, my delegation notes that strengthened and effective safeguards are fundamental to the operation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The indefinite extension of the Treaty in 1995 was a major advance in nuclear non-proliferation. Next year will see the start of the enhanced NPT review process, to which my country attaches considerable importance. From the perspective of the IAEA, it is clear what is expected. I quote from the Principles and Objectives adopted at last year's Review Conference:

> "International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards should be regularly assessed and evaluated. Decisions adopted by its Board of Governors (...) should be supported and implemented and the Agency's capability to detect undeclared nuclear activities should be increased." *(NPT/Conf.1995/32 (Part I, annex, para. 11)*

But the Agency's involvement in the NPT review process does not stop at developing enhanced safeguards. Once again, the secretariat of the Agency and Member States will be examining the implementation of articles III and IV of the Treaty. My delegation looks forward to cooperating with other Members in the three-year review process, culminating in the next Review Conference in the year 2000.

It is clear that the activities of the Agency are relevant to all countries, not just to those with nuclear industries. New Zealand looks forward to playing its part in ensuring the continuing effectiveness of the Agency.

Mr. Petrella (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation welcomes the detailed and balanced report on the activities of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) since the issuance of its 1995 annual report (GC(40)/8), just introduced by the IAEA Director General, Mr. Hans Blix.

During the past year, important progress has been achieved in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy in my country and in the international community. At the domestic level, the national Government, owing to radical economic reforms, has made progress in the far-reaching process of bilateral cooperation with countries committed to the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

In this connection, Argentine corporations are finalizing the construction of a third reactor for research on and the production of radioisotopes, contracted for by a friendly country.

In addition, the Argentine Atomic Energy Commission, which has half a century of experience, has initiated the final phase of the design of a modern, modular low-power reactor with a high degree of safety. This reactor could be used to generate electric power for cities with more than 200,000 inhabitants or for the desalination of sea water. Argentina is firmly prepared to share this technology with interested countries that have a firm policy of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

With regard to Argentina's relations with the Agency, I wish to stress that we are continuing to provide complete support for technical cooperation activities. My country provides the IAEA with technical experts for specific cooperation projects with other

countries. In addition, we offer regular training and education courses for interns from other member States of the IAEA.

We believe it is necessary for member States of the IAEA to make voluntary contributions in order to implement fully the Agency's technical cooperation programme. In this context, we would like to stress the importance for national economies of regional programmes for the development of nuclear energy.

Accordingly, my Government consistently supports the programme established under the Regional Cooperative Arrangements for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America (ARCAL). We congratulate the secretariat of the Agency for its important efforts in recent months, in cooperation with the countries of the region, aimed at updating and modernizing that programme.

In addition, within the regional framework, we continue to strengthen the work of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL). In this context, I should like to refer to resolution C/E/res.27, which was adopted by that organization, and which promotes cooperation and consultation between members of the various nuclear-weapon-free zones.

With respect to the strengthening of the IAEA safeguards system, we have initiated work with the secretariat of the Agency with a view to implementing part 1 of Programme "93 + 2" in Argentine nuclear installations. We urge States participating in the intergovernmental committee to finalize negotiations on part 2 of that programme. Completion would make it possible to improve the current safeguards system by providing the Agency with better instruments to prevent or detect possible deviations from the non-proliferation system.

In this context, and in order to ensure that such modernization is effective, we believe it essential for the new safeguards system to be universal in application and, accordingly, completely independent of what kind of agreements countries have with the Agency.

My country wishes to express its profound satisfaction at the recent entry into force of the Convention on Nuclear Safety. In this respect, the national executive authority has initiated procedures so that Congress can ratify the Convention.

With regard to the IAEA Standing Committee on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage, the Argentine Government welcomes the results achieved at the most recent meeting on the negotiation of a draft protocol on additional financing of a universal nature. We hope that this process will lead to the convening of a diplomatic conference in 1997.

We are also following with particular interest the initiatives of the international community with regard to the transport of radioactive waste by sea, and we believe that the adoption by the International Maritime Organization of a code on the safe transport of irradiated nuclear material, plutonium and highly radioactive waste is an important first step to safeguard the interests of coastal States.

Finally, I wish to reiterate my congratulations to the Director General of the IAEA, who we believe is one of the most important personalities in the system, and, through him, to the entire staff of the secretariat of the Agency for their well-known professionalism, which has been manifested in the important results achieved by the International Atomic Energy Agency in the past year.

Mr. González Gálvez (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): It is an honour and a pleasure to express, on behalf of the delegation of Mexico, our appreciation to Mr. Blix for the report on the work done last year by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which he leads so brilliantly and competently. Again, we congratulate him and reiterate our support and appreciation.

Although we understand that Mr. Blix has decided not to stand for re-election as Director Agency of the Agency, my Government wishes to thank him in particular for his work on the development of the reactors at Laguna Verde and for a series of projects on the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, as well as for his firm support for the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which prohibits nuclear weapons in Latin America. We wish to thank him, in his capacity as an official and as a colleague, for his contribution to the cause of peace, to which we are all committed.

The detailed report of the work carried out by the Agency in the different areas of its mandate gives us a clear picture of the valuable efforts made in the fields of nuclear-generated electricity and the use of nuclear technology for human health, agriculture, food and environmental protection, and the progress achieved with

regard to technical cooperation and nuclear and radiological safety.

Mexico supports the work of the Agency in carrying out its important mandate and advocates balance, which we consider essential, between its security activities and those for cooperation and technical assistance. We attach particular importance to all aspects of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, of which the international safeguards regime is an essential element. We are particularly pleased with the recent signing of the Treaties of Bangkok and Pelindaba, which establish nuclear-weapon-free zones in South-East Asia and Africa. We hope that the Treaty of Bangkok will resolve the current problems with regard to the delimitation of that zone and its interpretation by certain nuclear Powers in that area.

We also welcome the progress achieved in strengthening the IAEA safeguards system, such as the establishment of an open-ended committee to draft a protocol for the implementation of the measures of Programme "93 + 2", which require additional authority and complementary judicial powers, such as broader access to information and the expansion of physical access.These measures should, of course, be consistent with the rights and constitutions of States.

Mexico's desire to participate actively in strengthening the safeguards system was emphasized in a formal offer to hold in our country field trials for the measures contained in part 2 of Programme "93 + 2".

For the time being, the voluntary offer provides neither a binding commitment nor any precedent for the implementation of the safeguards the IAEA is carrying out in Mexican territory by virtue of the Treaty of Tlatelolco and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). With Mexico's ratification of the Convention on Nuclear Safety on 26 July 1996, the necessary number of ratifications was reached for the Convention's entry force, just four days ago. Mexico has thereby reiterated its lasting commitment to the objectives of the IAEA and its interest in attaining its goals in connection with nuclear safety. Since the process has already been launched in the IAEA, the Board of Governors should be enlarged to enhance its representativeness and effectiveness.

There should also be greater clarity with regard to criteria for the appointment of member States to the Board. Account should be taken of progress made by member States in a specific geographical area — in terms of the percentage of energy produced from nuclear sources, for example. Mexico welcomes the progress made in the preparatory work on the Convention on Nuclear Safety and in the management of radioactive waste. At the same time, we would like to express our Government's great interest in promoting work on the implementation of the Convention, which should enjoy broad adherence and international consensus on general security principles. Moreover, the Convention should be applied to all kinds of radioactive waste, irrespective of its origin, and guarantee the protection of human health and the environment.

Mexico welcomes the progress made in the review of the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and the preparation of a convention on additional compensation which woudl help strengthen the international regime on liability for nuclear damage.

Lastly, my delegation allies itself with the support expressed by the European Union for the adoption of measures to enhance the Agency's capacity to detect undeclared nuclear activities. In this connection, Mexico welcomes the establishment of the committee to draft an additional protocol to the safeguards agreements that most States have already agreed to on a bilateral basis with the IAEA. In this way, one of the main goals of the Agency can be achieved: a strengthened, efficient and universal safeguards system.

The peaceful uses of nuclear energy are increasingly diverse and important for development. In Mexico's opinion, the IAEA should step up and expand cooperation and assistance so that we can all benefit from science and technology. At the same time, the growing number of nuclear-weapon-free zones and the achievements in nuclear disarmament, which we hope will continue and progress, will mean new and more important obligations for the International Atomic Energy Agency in terms of nuclear safety. The international community's recognition of and confidence in the role played by the Agency led the Conference on Disarmament, with Mexico's resolute support, to recommend that the Agency cooperate with the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization in areas where the IAEA has a comparative advantage. Its experience will be an important factor in strengthening an effective system to verify a complete ban on nuclear test explosions.

The Agency headed by Mr. Blix is dynamic and solvent and undoubtedly have to cope, as it has thus far, with the challenge of growing responsibilities and limited

resources. Its representativeness and effectiveness must be increased, as should the transparency of its decision-making processes, and its security and cooperation activities must be better balanced. We have confidence in the International Atomic Energy Agency; we have confidence in its Director General.

Mr. Mazilu (Romania): At the outset, allow me, on behalf of my delegation, to congratulate Mr. Hans Blix, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), for his clear and concise introduction of the annual report, which stressed the main achievements and trends of the activity of the Agency over the last year.

My delegation fully shares the assessments and proposals contained in this report. We would like to underscore the significant contribution of the Director General to the achievement of the goals laid down in the Agency's statute and in the pertinent resolutions adopted by the General Assembly.

My delegation endorses the views expressed on this report by the delegation of Ireland on behalf of the European Union and the associated countries.

At the same time, my delegation would like to make the following comments on some specific issues. First, as the Assembly knows, my country is actively participating in the ongoing efforts for the wider peaceful use of atomic energy, as well in the world community's *démarches* towards the promotion of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, the basic precondition for establishing a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Secondly, I have the honour to inform the Assembly that in April 1996, my country inaugurated the first unit of the Cernavoda Nuclear Power Plant. By mid-October 1996, the unit reached the planned parameters. We would like to stress that the functioning of this Power Plant highlights our very fruitful cooperation with companies from Canada, Italy and the United States, as well as the qualified technical assistance received from the International Atomic Energy Agency.

My Government is aware of its huge responsibility regarding the safe functioning of this power plant. We have already envisaged the necessary steps for environmental protection that should accompany its functioning.

Thirdly, we appreciate the technical assistance and cooperation programme undertaken by the Agency. It has to be emphasized that technical cooperation is the Agency's *most directly relevant area of activity to many of its* members. We welcome, in particular, those initiatives undertaken by the Agency to strengthen the Technical Cooperation Programme and to make it more effective and more relevant to sustainable development. Technical cooperation should focus on improvements in management, such as the systematic assessment of the status of radiation safety in member States and the planning of time-limited follow-up activities. It is the view of my delegation that the Standing Advisory Committee on Technical Cooperation should make the necessary recommendation on means to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Technical Cooperation Programme.

My country expresses hope in the future maintenance of the level of technical assistance by the Agency, with a view to answering the pressing needs of the development of its nuclear programme. On its part, Romania can support the Agency's cooperation programmes by offering the knowledge and experience of many Romanian experts who are ready to work within the framework of activities carried out by the IAEA.

Fourthly, bearing in mind the major aspects of the peaceful uses of atomic energy for the benefit of our country's economic and social development, we would once more like to stress that our country is supporting the Agency's measures for strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime, within the context of the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

Likewise, we are determined to further apply in good faith the measures contained in Programme 93 + 2. We also consider that the adoption of a model protocol additional to the comprehensive safeguards agreements would be of great importance to the strengthening of the IAEA's system of verification of nuclear materials and installations, as well as of other related items. From this perspective, we share the opinion that this new proposed additional protocol should be a balanced document, acceptable to all parties. Furthermore, we think that the urgent adoption of this legal instrument would represent a new significant step towards the consolidation of the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

Fifthly, our country firmly supports the measures taken by the Agency to improve the safe operation of nuclear plants and storage of radioactive waste. We would like to commend the Agency for the intense

activity it has carried out in this area, as well as in the field of preventing illicit trafficking in nuclear materials.

The tenth anniversary of the tragic accident at Chernobyl provided an opportune moment for the Agency to review the consequences of the accident and the lessons that have been learned. It is the view of my Government that the Agency should take further necessary steps to prevent similar accidents in the future, bearing in mind the tragic lesson of Chernobyl.

We would like to emphasize the importance of international cooperation and partnership in addressing nuclear safety concerns. We welcome the measures taken by the European Union for the strengthening of regulatory regimes, including the establishment of a nuclear safety account. We also consider it appropriate to put into effect bilateral cooperation projects in this field.

There is no doubt that the primary responsibility for nuclear safety rests with national Governments. At the same time, we welcome the initiatives taken by the IAEA to strengthen cooperation and mutual assistance, and its continuing work in fostering a global nuclear safety culture. We appreciate that the Convention on Nuclear Safety is a major accomplishment of the Agency in this field. This legal instrument binds countries to basic principles covering the regulation, management and operation of land-based civil nuclear power plants. It is our hope that as many countries as possible will ratify this Convention as soon as possible. My Government considers that all should be done at the national and international levels not only to limit the effects of nuclear accidents, but to prevent them completely and to guarantee the safe operation of every nuclear plant.

Regarding radioactive waste management, my Government appreciates the efforts made to formulate a draft convention, which should stipulate clear responsibilities in this field in order to avoid unacceptable public and environmental risks now and in the future. It is necessary to establish an effective nuclear liability regime, providing adequate and equitable compensation to victims in the event of a nuclear accident. At the last session of the Standing Committee on Liability for Nuclear Damage, broad agreement was achieved on the revision of the Vienna Convention and important conclusions were reached on supplementary funding. We fully share the view expressed by other Member States that all necessary steps should be taken to strengthen the international nuclear liability regime.

To conclude, I would like to reiterate the full support of my Government for promoting the Agency's programmes and activities as noted in the draft resolution submitted to the General Assembly for its consideration.

Mr. Tonishi (Japan): My delegation would like to thank the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr. Hans Blix, for his comprehensive and clear introduction of the Agency's report, on which I would like to make some remarks.

First of all, I note with satisfaction that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) was adopted by the General Assembly with the support of the overwhelming majority of Member States. I welcome the adoption of the Treaty as a historic step towards nuclear disarmament. It is hoped that, with its accumulated expertise in the field of nuclear safeguards, the IAEA will assist the CTBT Organization, which is to be located in Vienna, in its efforts to implement the Treaty effectively.

Progress has been achieved based on the Framework Agreement between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. This includes the conclusion in December last year of the Agreement between the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) and the DPRK on the supply of a light-water reactor project and six on-site surveys carried out by KEDO. Japan calls upon the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to adhere strictly to the Framework Agreement and strongly urges it to implement fully the safeguards agreement with the IAEA in order to dispel the concerns of the international community. My Government continues to commend and support the Director General and his staff for their consistent and impartial efforts to implement the safeguards agreement between the IAEA and the DPRK, including their efforts to monitor the freeze of specified facilities, as requested by the Security Council.

The experiences of the IAEA illustrated the need to strengthen further its safeguards system. The Agency has already begun to address this need, but it is particularly important that it improve its ability to detect undeclared nuclear-development activities. Japan supports Programme "93+2", which seeks to formulate measures to strengthen the effectiveness and improve the efficiency of the safeguards system. My Government, with the aim of ensuring the full and early implementation of this Programme, will continue to take an active part in the

work of the committee as it drafts a model additional protocol to the current safeguards agreement.

With regard to nuclear safety, the entry into force on 24 October of this year of the Convention on Nuclear Safety is truly an epoch-making development. Japan is hopeful that this Convention will ensure a high level of safety in the use of nuclear power throughout the world and appeals to all States to become parties to it. In this connection, Japan will continue to contribute to an early agreement in the ongoing discussions for a convention on the safety of radioactive-waste management.

It is significant that at the Summit on Nuclear Safety and Security, which was held in Moscow in April of this year, the leaders of the G-7 nations and the Russian Federation not only confirmed the main principles relating to the safety of nuclear power, but also affirmed the importance of international cooperation in the field of nuclear safety. As a means of building upon the achievements of the Summit in the context of the Asian region, where countries are pursuing the introduction of nuclear-power generation, Japan is preparing to convene the Tokyo conference on nuclear safety in Asia in the early part of November this year.

Japan attaches great importance to the multilateral technical cooperation activities of the Agency and has actively contributed both human and financial resources to them. It will continue to provide as much support as possible to help develop and improve human resources, skills and technology in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

The IAEA plays an essential and expanding role in the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and in maintaining and strengthening the non-proliferation regime. I would like to emphasize, in conclusion, that the degree to which the Agency is successful depends ultimately upon the firm support of Member States. Japan, for its part, is determined to continue to do its best to further develop this important organization.

Mr. Danesh-Yazdi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I would like to commend Mr. Blix, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), for his informative statement. His personal efforts and dedication, as well as those of the IAEA Secretariat, in pursuance of its objectives for peaceful uses of nuclear technology throughout the world, in accordance with its statute, have always been appreciated by my country.

My delegation has reviewed the annual report of the IAEA for 1995. We are pleased to see that the Agency continues to make progress on its mandated objectives and duties. I take this opportunity to comment on some of the issues mentioned in the report.

First, on the technical cooperation programme of the Agency, my delegation reiterates the importance and validity of this aspect of IAEA duties and the need to enhance it in an efficient manner. The IAEA role in promoting peaceful uses of nuclear technology in different areas, ranging from agriculture to medicine, needs the attention and support of all members of the Agency. There is a need for the Agency to focus further on meeting the developing countries' requirements and needs for peaceful utilization of nuclear technology, especially in the energy sector. It is our view that the activities of the IAEA in other areas should not adversely affect the operation of the technical cooperation programme and that resources should be allocated evenly among different programmes of the Agency.

Secondly, my delegation welcomes the continued efforts by the Member States in negotiations to agree on a protocol on strengthening the safeguard regime. Iran, as an original signatory of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), has always adhered to the Agency's safeguards, has pursued an open and transparent policy in this respect and will continue to support the effectiveness of the safeguard regime.

We believe the strengthened safeguard system should enhance international cooperation in peaceful uses of nuclear technology. Furthermore, the protocol should not be limited only to those countries that already have full-scope safeguard agreements with the Agency. To address the concerns of the international community and achieve its stated objectives, the protocol should serve as an independent instrument which commits all States parties to the NPT on an equal footing. Hence, the nuclear-weapon States should be equally committed to the protocol.

Thirdly, on the issue of nuclear-weapon-free zones, I would like to recall that despite more than 20 years of discussions and resolutions on the subject, the Middle Eastern countries have yet to agree on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in their region. This is due mainly to Israel's refusal — with the full support of certain Powers — to join the NPT and place its facilities under IAEA safeguards.

Iran believes that establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in different regions of the world is of the utmost importance and, for its part, would spare no effort in promoting this concept in all parts of the world, particularly in the Middle East. The continued operation of unsafeguarded and non-peaceful nuclear reactors in Israel is a source of grave concern to the international community in general and to the Middle East region in particular. As long as the Powers behind Israel do not give up their double-standard attitude and continue their self-serving policy of ignoring Israel's refusal to join the NPT and have its facilities placed under IAEA safeguards, the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East will remain a distant goal. My country, which initiated the proposal for establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East in 1974, is prepared to support any genuine and practical plan for its realization.

My delegation notes the developments in the discussions on the revision of article VI of the Agency's Statute. It is a fact that certain regions do not enjoy adequate representation in the IAEA's main decision-making body. This issue has been discussed in the Agency over the past 20 years without any concrete results. Given the political realities in the world and the three-fold increase in the Agency's membership, we hope that an agreement on this issue might be reached by the next session of the Agency's General Conference.

With regard to the classification of member States in regional groups, it is our deep conviction that the grouping of member States should be consistent with the determination to see continued progress in the work of the Agency and should not be seen as a self-serving policy of some member States without due regard for the political realities of the regions. While supporting the right of every member State to be represented on the IAEA Board of Governors, it is our firm belief that member States that desire to do so should not represent any region so long as its membership in the region concerned and its representation of the region are not agreed to by the countries that are located in that region. Furthermore, the member States of each region should have the final decision on accepting any new member to the group. This is not an issue that should be forced upon regions.

The last issue I should like to raise concerns the unjustifiable insistence of some nations on the unilateral evaluation and certification of the activities of other members of the Agency. As was reaffirmed in the Declaration of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the IAEA remains the competent authority to verify and assure that the obligations of States Parties to the NPT are being fulfilled and that nothing is done to undermine the authority of the Agency in that regard. My delegation opposes the continued use of unilateral mechanisms for the evaluation, qualification and certification of some member States, since they are not consistent with the letter and spirit of the NPT, the principles of the sovereign equality of States and non-intervention and they undermine the authority of the IAEA.

I will conclude by reiterating our support for Mr. Blix and the Agency in promoting cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Programme of work

The President took the Chair.

The President: I should like to inform members that the programme of work for the remainder of October and for the month of November was issued this morning as document A/INF/51/3/Rev.1/Add.1. The list of speakers for each of the items listed in that document is now open. I will in due course announce dates for the consideration of other agenda items, and keep the Assembly informed of any additions or changes.

Announcement

The President: I should like to make an announcement concerning agenda item 21, entitled "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance", which is scheduled for consideration by the General Assembly on Thursday, 21 November. The President of the General Assembly

has requested His Excellency Mr. Ernst Sucharipa, Permanent Representative of Austria, who so ably coordinated informal consultations during the fiftieth session on draft resolutions under agenda item 21, to assist him in the same capacity at this session, and Ambassador Sucharipa has graciously accepted.

I request those delegations intending to submit draft resolutions under agenda item 21 to do so as early as possible in order to allow time, if need be, for negotiations with a view to reaching consensus on the draft resolutions. In this connection, I should like to inform members that the first meeting of the informal consultations will be announced in the *Journal*.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.